

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 164809

63

ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 OMB-01 AID-05 DHA-02 ORM-01 ACDA-05

EB-07 SAM-01 /097 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/IRN:BBMORTON/HLK

APPROVED BY NEA - SIDNEY SOBER

AF/E:GKULICK (DRAFT)

NEA/ARP - MR. DICKMAN (DRAFT)

H - R. FLATEN (INFO)

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R 122024Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DOHA MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, MARR, SO

SUBJT: BRIEFING OF AMBASSADORS ON SOVIET FACILITIES IN

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PAGE 02 STATE 164809

BERBERA

1. SENATOR DEWEY BARTLETT ON JULY 10 AND 11 GAVE INDIVIDUAL BRIEFINGS ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO SOMALIA TO SAUDI AND IRANIAN AMBASSADORS. DEPARTMENT OFFICER ATTENDED BRIEFING OF IRANIAN AMBASSADOR ZAHEDI, WHICH LASTED 90 MINUTES. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY REPORT.

2. SENATOR KEPT ENTIRE BRIEFING IN LOW KEY AND MADE CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN FACTS AS OBSERVED BY HIS TEAM OR DEVELOPED BY INTELLIGENCE METHODS AND CONCLUSIONS HE HAD DRAWN BASED ON HIS ANALYSIS OF THOSE FACTS. FACTUAL PRESENTATION WAS ALONG LINES OF WHAT HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO MEDIA, BUT SENATOR ADDED EMPHASIS BY FREQUENT REFERENCE TO CHARTS AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOVIET FACILITIES AND VESSELS IN BERBERA.

3. SENATOR OPENED BRIEFING BY OPINING THAT SOMALI GOVERNMENT INVITED HIS TEAM BECAUSE IT WANTS U.S. AID, ESPECIALLY FOOD AND TRANSPORT TO HELP WITH REFUGEE PROBLEM. HE BELIEVES THERE IS REAL DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH U.S., POSSIBLY UP TO THE LEVEL OF SOMALI RELATIONS WITH USSR. HE ALSO BELIEVES THERE WAS PRESSURE FROM SOME MEMBERS OF REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL WHO WOULD PREFER ARMS-LENGTH RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS. SENATOR HAD NO EVIDENCE, BUT THOUGHT SAUDIS MIGHT HAVE PUT SOME PRESSURE ON SOMALIS TO SEEK ALTERNATIVE TO DEPENDENCE ON COMMUNIST WORLD FOR SUPPORT.

4. SENATOR THEN GAVE STEP-BY-STEP ACCOUNT OF VISIT TO BERBERA FACILITIES AND POINTED OUT SPECIFIC THINGS HE HAD SEEN THAT LED HIM TO CONCLUDE THAT FACILITIES ARE FOR USE OF SOVIET NAVY AND ARE UNDER SOVIET CONTROL. HE EMPHASIZED THAT MISSILE-HANDLING FACILITY IS MUCH LARGER THAN WOULD BE REQUIRED TO DEAL ONLY WITH STYX MISSILES, CRATES FOR WHICH TEAM OBSERVED, AND IS CAPABLE OF HANDLING "ANYTHING THE SOVIETS HAVE." HE NOTED THAT TEAM FOUND THAT HF LONG-RANGE RADIO TRANSMITTER WAS MORE POWERFUL THAN PREVIOUSLY REALIZED AND THAT VARIOUS BUILDINGS NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION FOR UNKNOWN PURPOSES WILL ADD TO PERMANENCY AND VERSATILITY OF FACILITIES. HE DESCRIBED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 164809

USE OF BERBERA BY SOVIET J-CLASS SUBMARINES AND OTHER VESSELS AND PROVIDED DETAILS ON 14-17,000 FOOT AIRSTRIP NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

5. SENATOR THEN DISCUSSED SOMALI REFUGEE PROBLEM AND NOMAD RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM, NOTING THAT CURRENTLY ALMOST ALL AID TO SOMALIA COMES FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES.

6. PRESIDENT SIAD HAD TOLD SENATOR HE HOPED FOR USN PORT CALL ON MOGADISCIO. SENATOR REPLIED HE THOUGHT CALL ON BERBERA WOULD BE MORE MEANINGFUL.

7. SENATOR CONCLUDED BRIEFING BY SAYING THAT, WHILE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE SIGNIFICANT FACILITIES AT BERBERA, SOMALI INVITATION TO HIM TO MAKE INSPECTION VISIT MEANS THAT DOOR IS OPEN TO US AND THERE MAY BE OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS. HE BELIEVES THIS SHOULD BE EXPLORED.

8. ZAHEDI EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR BRIEFING AND NOTED IRANIAN UNDERSTANDING OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF BERBERA FACILITIES. HE THOUGHT THAT EVENTS IN SOMALIA WOULD BE OF GREATEST INTEREST TO SAUDI ARABIA, WHICH HE FELT HAS MUCH LEVERAGE AS MAJOR MARKET FOR SOMALI EXPORTS AND IS GEOGRAPHICALLY CLOSE. HE CONCLUDED LENGTHY EXPOSITION ON HIS FAMILIARITY WITH US AID PROGRAMS AND SUCCESSES AND ON FAILURES OF US AND SOVIET POLICIES IN AFRICA AND ARAB WORLD ON HOPEFUL NOTE. EXPRESSED PERSONAL HOPE US WOULD MAKE GOOD USE OF OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED IN BERBERA. ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RELIEF, FOREIGN RELATIONS, CODELS, AMBASSADORS, MILITARY BASES, BRIEFING MATERIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE164809
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: BBMORTON/HLK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750242-0187
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750760/aaaacbjj.tel
Line Count: 137
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUN 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <22 OCT 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: : BRIEFING OF AMBASSADORS ON SOVIET FACILITIES IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, MARR, SO, (BARTLETT, DEWEY)
To: TEHRAN MOGADISCO
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006